

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L VATICAN 000441

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/WE LEVIN; NEA/RA; NEA/NGA;DRL/IRF ABRAMSON,DEATHERAGE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2/18/2015

TAGS: [IZ](#) [KIRF](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [VT](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQI EXPAT PRIEST MARKED FOR REVENGE

CLASSIFIED BY: D. Brent Hardt, CDA, AMEMBASSY VATICAN , US DEPT OF STATE.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

-----  
Summary  
-----

[1](#)1. (C) Monsignor Philip Najim, Representative of the Chaldean Catholic Church to the Holy See, told us recently that his name had been published on a list of alleged collaborators with the Hussein regime published in the Iraqi Shi'a newspaper Al-Hawza. The paper specifically accused Najim passing privileged information from his contacts at the Vatican to the Hussein government. Najim has denied the charges and accused the Iraqi ambassador to Italy of planting his name on the Al-Hawza list. Najim is a frequent embassy contact who has been based in Rome for many years. He also spent some time in the UK after leaving Iraq. He appears to be well-regarded by the Chaldean hierarchy, but we cannot judge the veracity of these charges or Najim's denials.  
End Summary.

-----  
Priest's Name on Shi'a List  
-----

[1](#)2. (C) Monsignor Philip Najim, Representative of the Chaldean Catholic Church to the Holy See and a frequent Embassy contact, told us recently that his name had been published on a list of alleged collaborators with the regime of Saddam Hussein. He said that the list, which included Iraqis, Americans, and members of other nationalities, was published in the Shi'a newspaper Al-Hawza, and then released on the internet.

[1](#)3. (C) Najim explained that he had been accused of passing privileged information from his contacts at the Vatican to the Hussein government, including confidential information from what Al-Hawza described as a "secret meeting" between President Clinton and the Pope several years ago. Najim denied the charges, terming them "ridiculous." He has few family members still in Iraq, but now fears for his own safety when he returns to his homeland on official business for the Patriarch. Najim noted that Iraqi Ambassador to the Holy See, Edward Ismail Yelda, a Christian with good Shi'a contacts, was working to remove his name from the list, but was unsure how successful these efforts would be.

-----  
Ambassador to Italy Involved?  
-----

[1](#)4. (C) A subsequent conversation with Najim revealed more about the bitter rivalries among Iraqi expats and those connected to the former regime. He charged that the Iraqi ambassador to the government of Italy, Mohammed Al-Amili, had likely been the one to plant his name on the Al-Hawza list. "He is in charge of all the names [on the list] from Italy," Najim claimed. He noted darkly Al-Amili's lengthy service to the Hussein regime in diplomatic assignments since 1968, and said that the diplomat seemed to be scheming against both Najim and Yelda. [Note: Al-Amili told Embassy Rome that he was the only diplomat from the Saddam era still representing Iraq. According to Al-Amili, this is because he is seen as a career diplomat not linked to the regime. End Note.] According to Najim, Al-Amili was lobbying Baghdad to close the Iraqi Embassy to the Holy See and have Yelda set up shop elsewhere as a non-resident ambassador.

-----  
Comment  
-----

[1](#)5. (C) We have generally received good information on Iraq from Monsignor Najim, and he appears to have a solid relationship with the Chaldean Patriarch -- as noted most recently during a February 17 lunch that the two shared with the Charge (septel). However, we have no way to gauge the credibility

of these charges. Although he is critical at times of U.S. policy in Iraq, Najim is generally positive about USG intentions when speaking to us. He is nevertheless known to tailor his message to his audience. A French diplomatic colleague who speaks to Najim remarked to us recently that he found

Najim "remarkably anti-American" in their conversations.

HARDT

NNNN

2005VATICA00441 - Classification: CONFIDENTIAL